

The Republican.

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CORN LAWS.

WERE it not for the circumstance, that there is about to be a general attack upon these laws, the subject would be deemed too trivial for "The Republican." They form but a point in the system which is here attacked as a whole. I have been often solicited to say something expressly against the system of tithes. I have answered, that it does not become me to exclaim against the one oppression of tithes, while I attack, incessantly, in the aggregate, the whole vice of religion. It would be like leaving the root, that may be destroyed, to pluck the branches, which will grow again. Still, as the multitude will, from motives of fear, prejudice, or ignorance, attack the branches rather than the root of an evil, it may be well, in some cases, to lead them on from branch to branch, until they come to the root. With this view, I offer a few words on this subject.

The Corn Laws are an individual evil, which also form one of a multitude, supported by, and necessary to the support of, each other. They constitute, in reality, that monopoly of the sale and profit of an article by a few individuals, which tyranny, formerly, in this country, and still, in other countries, granted and grants by charter to one or more individuals. The one was and is a charter granted by an individual tyrant; the other, the Corn Laws, a charter granted by a body, the majority of which legislates tyrannically for its own interests, to the injury of the community.

There should be no laws to interfere with the produce or sale of any article. The common sense and common interest of mankind will best legislate for the common welfare, in all cases of traffic. No Legislature can see those effects of minute operations which individuals can see for themselves. No general rule or fixed law will apply to their proper regulation. All legislative monopoly of profits and benefits robs the multitude of the common chance of sharing profits, and enhances the price of an article by removing the proper competitions for its cheap produce. And as far as the object of a Legislature be revenue for the main.

tenance of government and general protection, that revenue is lessened by every act which lessens the diffusion of profits and the most complete competition in the produce and free sale of an article. The extent of revenue is not so much that which can be raised by the power of monopoly and taxation; as that which the greatest number of persons can afford to expend: and the more free they are left in their competition, the more they will be able to afford in the expenditure, which constitutes a revenue, let the form be what it may, in which that revenue is raised.

The expenditure which arises from the individual or family aggrandizement that is produced by monopoly and unfair legislation, and that produces poverty and inactivity, for want of a demand for labour and the produce of labour, is not to be compared in its extent and utility with that uniform and diffused expenditure which free competition and unfettered trade would produce. The one benefits the small circle in which a family can move, and extends nothing but a vicious power over the multitude; the other is diffused throughout the family of a nation, giving new impulses of vigour to every virtuous part, and producing, with an equality of interests, that equality of power, about which the reforming politician talks so much, as the basis of the most diffused liberty.

The following is a well-drawn petition on the subject of the Corn Laws, and is in the course of receiving signatures for presentation early in the ensuing Session of Parliament. It touches many, but not all the evils which these laws produce; nor does it notice all the interests which are *pro* and *con* affected by these laws.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

*The PETITION of the undersigned INHABITANTS of LONDON
and WESTMINSTER:*

SHEWETH,
THAT the awful distress which has recently visited the Manufacturing Population of this country, has induced your Petitioners respectfully to approach your Honourable House, in order to point out what appear to your Petitioners to be some of the principal causes of the calamity, and to pray your Honourable House for the removal of them.

That your Honourable House cannot but be acquainted with the fact, that labour in England is applied with more energy, with more skill, and for a greater number of hours out of the four-and-twenty, than in any other country of Europe.

That it seems reasonable that the labourer's command over the necessaries of life should, in some measure, depend upon the efficacy of his exertions ; and that the high intrinsic value of British labour should secure for it a high exchangeable value in the market.

That the industrious workman, who might form such an expectation, would experience the most bitter disappointment ; the due and natural proportion between the intrinsic work and the market price of labour having been so deteriorated, that, though the British labourer executes, in any given number of days, a greater quantity of work than the labourer of any other country, yet he receives, as his daily wages, a less quantity of the necessaries of life than the labourer in many other countries ; and that, while the workmen of this island are capable of manufacturing for half the world, they have been unable to obtain for themselves, in return for their skilled, their energetic, and their persevering exertions, a sufficient quantity of the products of labour to support existence ; and have been preserved by parochial relief, or by the hand of private charity, from perishing from the face of the earth.

That your Petitioners are convinced, that the existing Corn Laws form one main and leading cause of the calamitous condition in which the operative classes of this country have been placed.

That these laws render it necessary to resort to inferior soils, and to adopt expensive modes of culture, in order to raise the necessary supplies of food, and of other agricultural products.

That resorting to such soils, and adopting such modes of tillage, cause a greater quantity of labour to be employed in raising the same quantity of the necessaries of life ; and it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that as more labour is required to produce necessaries, more labour will be required to purchase them.

That thus, as your Petitioners conceive, it amounts to a clear and complete demonstration, that a system of Corn Laws, restricting the importation of foreign agricultural produce, and thereby requiring the resorting to inferior lands, and the adopting of high and expensive modes of culture, must have the effect of raising the value of the necessaries of life, in relation to any given quantity of labour ; or, what comes to the same thing, of lowering the value of any given quantity of labour, as compared with those necessaries.

That your Petitioners submit to your Honourable House, that the people have an undoubted right to purchase their food wherever it can be obtained at the cheapest rate ; and, that artificial regulations, lowering the value of labour in relation to the necessaries of life, are an infringement upon this right, which infringement can be justified or excused only upon the supposition, that the evil which it inflicts upon the labouring classes is over-

balanced by some great and general good, secured to the community at large.

That your Petitioners are prepared to show, by reasoning, self-evident in all its steps, that the severe privations inflicted upon the labouring classes, by restrictions on the importation of foreign agricultural produce, are not compensated for by any preponderating advantage conferred upon other classes. That the existing Corn Laws are all but universally injurious. That the master-manufacturer, the merchant, the farmer, and, ultimately, the landed proprietor, are all, more or less, partakers in the retardation of prosperity, the diminution of wealth, and the approach to decline which they occasion; and that, by their operation, all the sources of income are rendered less productive; the same cause which gives to the labourer a diminished command over the necessities of life, lowering the profit upon capital, not only in manufactures and commerce, but also in agriculture.

That, in carrying on manufacturing industry, a certain quantity of agricultural produce must be consumed, in the form of food and material; and also a certain quantity of manufactured goods, in the form of clothing, tools, and machinery. That it is manifest, therefore, that manufacturing profits must fall as the value of agricultural produce rises. That, if the relative value of agricultural produce, and of manufactured goods, be such, that the master-manufacturer, with one-third of his fabrics, can purchase his raw material and the food of his labourers, while he uses another third for their clothing, tools, and machinery, it is evident that the remaining third will be a clear surplus, constituting a profit of 50 per cent. upon the capital expended. But, that if the value of agricultural produce rise, until it requires two-thirds of the master-manufacturer's fabrics to replace the food and material expended, the remaining third being, as before, required for clothing and machinery, no surplus can exist, and the master's profit will be reduced from 50 per cent. to nothing.

That the ruin thus inflicted upon the manufacturer speedily overtakes the farmer. That if, before the rise in the value of agricultural produce, the farmer used one-third of his crops for seed and for the food of his labourers, and with another third purchased their clothing and implements, the remaining third would be a clear surplus; and he, as well as the master-manufacturer, would obtain a profit of 50 per cent. upon the capital expended. That, if the value of the farmer's produce is doubled, because it is necessary for him to go to an inferior soil, upon which any given quantity of produce must be raised with a double expenditure, then, instead of one-third, he must use two-thirds of his crops for seed and food, and the remaining third will do no more than purchase for him the quantity of clothing and implements rendered necessary. That thus the quantity of produce obtained

will only replace the quantity expended, and the cultivator of the last quality of soil resorted to, will be placed on the same footing with the master-manufacturer, and will have his profits reduced from 50 per cent. to nothing.

That the fall of profits soon reaches the farmers who occupy the superior lands, upon which the same expenditure continues to raise the same quantity of produce as before. That it is not in the nature of things that, while master-manufacturers and cultivators of the last quality of land resorted to, made no profit at all, the occupiers of good land should, for any considerable time, be permitted to realise high returns. That, on the expiration of existing leases, all those who were in possession of disposable capital would bid against the holders of fertile land, until all that portion of the produce which remained, after the replacing of expenditure, was offered to the proprietor in the form of rent. That, after having enjoyed a short-lived advantage, from the rise in the value of agricultural produce, the ancient tenantry of the country would be either ejected from their farms, or reduced to a condition in which they could obtain only a bare subsistence.

That the proprietors of the soil could not continue to prosper while all the other classes of the community declined. That, for some time, rents would experience an extraordinary rise. But, at no distant period, the destruction of profit would cause capital to emigrate; the seats of manufacture and the marts of commerce to be removed to other countries; and the home demand for food and material to subside. That England, thus impoverished and depopulated, would, as in former times, export agricultural produce to the foreign market; and, the proprietors of the soil would discover, when too late, that it is only in a dense and opulent manufacturing population that the value of land can acquire and retain an extraordinary elevation.

That thus it appears, by clear and unanswerable proofs, that the existing restrictions upon the importation of foreign agricultural produce, are injurious to every class of the community; that they lower the real wages of labour, reduce the profits of capital, and, ultimately, bring down rents from that high level which they reach in a country, the circumstances of which lead, as in England, to the importation of corn, to the low level at which they settle in a country, the circumstances of which lead, as in Poland, to the exportation of corn.

That, as your Petitioners know, from dearly-bought experience, the calamities which follow from sudden changes in the direction of industry, they are far from desiring such an immediate and precipitate opening of the ports as might bring on a renewal of agricultural distress; and as their appeal to your Honourable House is founded on the principles of impartial justice, and of free and equal competition, they do not object to securing to British agriculture such protection as may be necessary to place it

on an equal footing with other branches of the national industry, by compensating the farmer for whatever excess of taxation may actually be imposed on him.

That, from all these considerations, the undersigned Petitioners most earnestly pray your Honourable House to enter upon an immediate revision of the Corn Laws, with a view to the gradual removal of every species of restriction upon the importation of food and raw material, and with the ultimate object of securing to British agriculture the only permanent protection which, in equity, it can claim—the abolition, or equalization, of all those taxes, assessments, or charges, which may be found to press with exclusive, or with disproportioned weight, upon the soil.

There are three classes of people to be affected by a repeal of the corn laws :

1st. The farmer, if his burtheus be not proportionately reduced.

2d. The landlord in his rent, if the farmer be not able to meet him as before ; and,

3d. The parson or the titheholder in his tithes. As far as the farmer is in question, the subject is a delicate one. This is not a class of people to be ruined for the national welfare. In England, they have long formed the most important class, in giving a substantial character to its community ; and where that character has decayed, there has been no improvement of character elsewhere to substitute for it. The manufacturing part of the people have become pitiable, through their excess of numbers and consequent smallness of wages. Every fluctuation in commerce, that lessens the demand for labour, places them in a deplorable state. The farmer's labourer was a day workman or yearly servant, who was neither injured by time nor season, by age nor sickness. The labourer in a manufactory of cotton, woollen, silk, or linen goods, has become a sort of machine that is to be used when wanted or while useful, and rejected without support when not wanted or not useful : and reduced to a pittance of wages that makes the excess of labour for it an oppressive, or at least, a lamentable state of existence.

The landlord and the titheholder are not of so much consequence, in a political point of view. Few of them can shew a just claim to this kind of property, and, therefore, there is the less to be lamented in any lessening of income that may fall upon them. It is the suffering labourer who is to be pitied, before the suffering landholder, titheholder, or other capitalist. It is real want that is to be relieved, before diminished luxury. Any spoliation of honestly accumulated capital is always to be deprecated ; but not so with the reduction of unjust incomes that

are obtained from public property: not so with the aristocratical landholder, the highly beneficed parson, or the oversalaried placemen and unjustly paid pensioner and sinecurist.

To relieve the farmer, after a repeal or with a repeal of the corn laws, there must be a diminution of taxation, or a revenue raised by means that are different from those now in practice.

The corn laws are rather the monopoly of the landlord in his high rents than any monopoly on the part of the farmer in his price of corn. They are the monopoly which supports the aristocracy and titheholders. Take away the tithes altogether and tax the landlord with a property tax, and the corn laws may be safely removed to the advantage of the farmer, as well as of every other labourer. Here is the bone of contention. The landlords are the majority of the legislators. The House of Lords is a *house of landlords*, and nothing equitable upon the subject of the land will ever proceed legislatively from them.

R. C.

WHAT IS GOD?

I AM informed, that this question produced Locke's celebrated Essay on the Human Understanding; and I must insinuate, that even that work has thrown no light on the subject. We still want demonstration and have learned; not to accept assertion for truth; but to consider conjectures as the day dreams of fancy and the offspring of luxuriant imagination. In the vast wilderness of writings, the mind has been led astray into the most remote recesses of credulousness and improbability. To vouch for the being of God, they supposed a beginning, not only to this world, but to all things, and have given a creative power to an uncreated nothing: as if it were a solution of the question to say, that, nothing created its own non-entity into an active creating power, and out of nothing produced every thing that is! I have here reduced the illimitable doctrines and jargon of the schools to a comprehensive *multum in parvo*. Let the reasonable consider it; the ignorant and the fanatic cannot. I shall proceed in the investigation with nothing but the evidence of experience. I have now before me a book which commences thus—“Although it be neither our province nor intention to prove what has often been done by abler hands: that this world which we inhabit is not eternal, and must, therefore, have been created by an all-mighty, and all-intelligent power; and the time, manner, and circumstances of its creation as delivered by Moses seem evi-

dently to bear the stamp of infallible truth." Where is the evidence? I see none. I feel none: and in lieu of infallible truth and admissible evidence, I am confronted with a puerile fabrication, an absurd fable, and a system which has been proved to be false in all its parts, and to be perfectly unworthy of omnipotence or of any degree of potence.

This is a question with which learning, arts, and science, have nothing to do. Wit, wisdom, and judgment, are equally at a loss. The good, and the bad, of mankind; the wise, and the foolish; the deeply learned, and the totally ignorant, are, in this case, upon an equal footing. History throws no light on the subject. They, who pretend to know all about it, are, in general, grossly ignorant of every thing but bible knowledge, which is, without any exception, the very worst knowledge obtained by man. It hardens his heart and excludes all higher information. Take the Bible for your study, and you must for ever remain in ignorance; take a priest for your guide and you must be for ever led astray. The first cannot teach you any thing; the latter will not. Who dares to peruse the natural history of the animal and vegetable kingdoms with the Bible in his hand: or who dares to rely on history with a priest annotating at his elbow? But should they: small will be their progress in the science; and as for our question, they dare not look at it, for though the priest cannot, or will not, enlighten the mind, or enlarge the understanding; he can, and will, terrify the imagination and petrify the stirring intellect. Yet, our question is a simple one, and the proper answer to it is as simple—I do not know. Sense, reason, and candour, dictate this answer to all the sons of men. But as cunning, hypocrisy, and prejudice; cowardice, ignorance, and interest, have much to say on the subject, it is proper that plain sense and unprejudiced reason should be heard also. We have much to surmount: many difficulties to overcome; powerful restraints to shake off; and much of which to divest ourselves before we can muster resolution to examine the matter with that courage and freedom of mind necessary for the investigation. All our fears, dogmas, terrors, and doubts hang like millstones on our loaded imaginations, and we tremble in idea at the black shadow which malignant superstition has hung over us. Having, after due preparation, fairly consigned the problem to the power of fearless thoughts, I can only anticipate the answer by saying, candidly, that I cannot form the most remote idea of a being under that name. For if such a being as the God, with which some of them seem to be so familiarly conversant, has an existence, this we may safely say, with the confidence of truth, that men, individually, or in the aggregate, have not, after all their preaching and praying, the slightest conception of him. To prove that there is a God, or that there is not one; no man, in the present day, will attempt; though experience teaches us to deny the sup-

position (for, at best, it is only supposition or conjecture). I must accuse the Christians point blank of doing more to destroy their *non possimus idol* than all the other Pantheists, Polytheists, Trinitheists, or Theists put together. Their God is what may be literally called a *humbug*. I seriously ask pardon of the readers of "The Republican" for using the term, and yet, though a vulgar expression, I think it correct. I have more to lay to the charge of these people. As they disgrace their God, so they degrade man. The Christians have a supernumerary crime peculiar to themselves to answer for the frail humanity, I mean that despicable one of decrying, traducing, and vilifying man. Calling themselves and the rest of the human race all manner of bad names: designating them by the worst of epithets, and regarding mankind, at least, by their language, as the production of an undetermined or doating God; who made man to vent his deliberate and unappeasable wrath upon him. I positively wonder at the mad fools! What can possess them to underrate and run run down society as they do? If there be an almighty creator of the universe, *himself uncreate*, as they say, it is surely paying him, as the inventor and maker of this world, and man in his own likeness, with a living soul, and HE too being all-wise, all good, and all-competent, a very bad compliment, to say nothing worse of it, to be continually railing at his handy-works, and telling him and his world before his face and behind his back,—that he has made a set of despicable vermin, who are a disgrace and a reproach to him:—that they are helpless worms, crawling reptiles, prone only to evil; full of filth and wickedness; contaminated with every vice under the sun; and fit for nothing but to be tied up in bundles like faggot-wood, and sent off to hell in waggon loads to be burnt alive, or roasted with all their feelings eternally acute.* The mercy of God continuing to sleep; but his rage and fury calculated to burn for ever! Vicious, villanous and terrible as this is, I am more than half inclined to smile at the horrid Christian picture; because the natural sense and reason of man discern the origin and absurdity of the tale, and properly impute to the true authors, the honour as well as the emolument of the fabrication. Let us form an article in the litany of sense, and pray—"From such an omnipotent, from such religious malignants, from such fools and deceivers, and from such merciless teachers, Good Reason deliver us."

This, by the way, has little or nothing to do with our question, as it is of man; but, indeed, to my thinking, our question is of man too. Unreasonable as the Theists and Christians are, we must not be so; we must use reason to the utmost of our rea-

* The man who has an idea of hell is a despicable being: but he who talks about it is an idiot.

R. C.

soning powers; not for the honour of God; but for the honour of man. Man is my subject, and the divinity but an intercalary article, introduced merely for the sake of argument. As there is much importance attached to it, by curiosity, fraud, and hypocrisy, as it is monopolized by law, ambition, and power, we shall argue the case in the simplest and most reasonable manner, that the weakest adversary can produce.

It is said, that I am sometimes harsh, and that I deal more in declamation than in argument. To those who so gently criticise my crude efforts, I bow with sincere respect, and wish for their sake, the public good, and my own credit, that I could write much better than I do; and I hate the cause (not the generous friends who honour me with their notice) which calls upon me to write about that mean, pernicious article, self—when the universe is my subject, and mankind only my study. I beg the reader of "The Republican" to accept this as an apology for my defect of style, not meaning to deprecate just observation; though I am not certain, that I can improve by censure: yet my candour owns and respects the justice of those, who point to my errors or faults of diction, and one observation only in answer I make; I write from my heart and personal feelings, and describe with all my power. Conscious of my own weakness, I challenge no one. Conscious also of my own integrity, the everlasting durability and steadfast powers of truth, which form the base and structure of my essays, I stand behind the sevenfold shield of independent veracity.—Now for the Deity.

If an Omnipotent Being designedly conceals himself from us, all our endeavours to penetrate the secret of his retreat must be equally presumptuous and fruitless. But this is supposing that there is one. I suppose no such thing:—and my business is only with the arrogant priests, who have created him and insist on it, that, under the pain of most terrible denunciations, we adore their imaginary idol, and respect themselves as his immediate ministers. To these, I answer directly:—Demonstrate to me your God, and both shall find in me a sincere, pious, and devout adorer. But still, I insist on it, as a request, within the verge of that reason which I feel.

They say the Almighty has manifested himself to man, and has taught the human race through the medium of one man to know the Almighty himself. I shall give God fair play, and I start forward, in the circle of his power, to ask him, or mankind, his abettors, is this fair? It would be acting very unjustly to make himself known to one man to inform all the rest. One to the whole, is as one to an innumerable multitude. Omnipotence could convince them all in an instant. But for one man to make converts of the general race, we find, from experience, is impossible for the delegated power of this alleged Almighty himself.

Let us suppose that the one-half were convinced, the other

half would, in justice, require the same mode and power of argument to establish their faith, before they could become believers.*

The case is otherwise; there is no revelation: that which goes under the name is evidently a fabrication, calculated by cunning to impose on ignorance. The daring assertion of one man and the unhesitating credulity of one hundred thousand produces no proof. I can easily suppose men to be fools and knaves; but that the one can lie and the other say he believes, alters not the case: fools and rogues are very indifferent vouchers for divinity. The heavens declare nothing about God; and the earth must learn something more than it knows, before it can divulge the secret of omnipotence.

Coming to an ultimatum; all that I can say is, that *I would believe, if I could*. But as I cannot conscientiously say that I believe: so I am not endued with the divine gift of lying to mislead others. I want the special grace of misleading them for emolument.

Give me leave to insinuate an argument highly in favour of a just and omnipotent God. It is simply this, that the greatest villains and most detestably immoral monsters, that have cursed and disgraced the world with their presence, have been the most pious and devout, and stood most out for the honour of God, not caring a farthing for their own. This must be allowed to be an excellent proof in favour of divinity.

"The fool suys in his heart there is no God." The knave says, from his teeth outwards, there is one. They are both alike. The wise man will never trouble his head or heart with what is incomprehensible and incommunicable; and one thing is clear, mankind are no better for believing or for saying they believe in one, than if they denied the creed, and argued against the imposing non-entity.

Yet the injury which the bare word *God* has done to society, rouses the feelings and impels us to chase it through all its windings. The world is involved in the important problem, and the question will one day be decidedly answered: it is already answered. But truth, sorry am I to say it, is slow of progress, and mankind, from the early prejudice of unnatural and inconsistent education, purposely instilled by designing authority, are led to believe any absurdity of wonder, miracle or improbability, in preference to the simplest and most satisfactory demonstration. God made the world. Who knows that? Who made God? Where is God? What is God? These are our proper questions.

It is easier for me to conceive that this world never had a beginning, than that nothing could create it out of nothing. For this simple but powerful reason: matter is equally uncreatable and indestructible; and

* And this to every generation. Were there but one generation, the instruction of all might ultimately be calculated upon; but the succession of generations is fatal to all religious arguments, as the succession of their religious opinions is fatal to the idea of a God intelligently overruling all, R. C.

ideal nothing cannot act upon substance. My learning informs me of a number of creeds, and almost an equal number of conjectural cosmogonies. From the whole, I only learn the vain propensity of curious man; to account for what is wholly unaccountable. One truth is deducible from philosophical experiments—that matter cannot be made out of nothing, and matter existing cannot be annihilated. Some of the godly declare this as a fact. We readily allow that the world may be disorganized by some potent existing power. But will it? is again an insolvable problem. We have every reason to suppose, that nature will guard against her own destruction and that the balance of her power is eternal: equal to all contingencies, however vast and inconceivable by man. The question—*How old is the world?* will never be answered, more than that of our important problem—*What is God?* But we may rest assured, that it is much older than any date that has ever been assigned to it. Every thing relating to its origin rests on conjecture, and in this case; the benefit of experience and decision of wisdom are lost in the fields of time and space. In this case, the incoherent ravings of a bedlamite, or the plausible theory of a sage are of equal importance. Geologists have never yet discovered one cubic foot or inch of virgin earth, in all their researches over the globe. The inference which follows is; that, in the great crucible of nature, every thing has been repeatedly dissolved, fused, amalgamated and convolved into new compounds, producing a residuum which has no claim to originality. Yet we know from historical and geographical records, that the present surface of the earth is now nearly what it was four thousand years ago. And such is the slowness of the innovating progress of sublime nature, that millions of years must elapse before a visible change in the geography of the globe takes place. That is, before known mountains are levelled, vallies filled up and a new surface formed. But this will never be effected, so as to produce a regular plain convexity. For, while mountains are wearing away on the dry earth, others are forming under the waters and are now shewing their heads in the questionable forms of islands in the wide wilderness of unfathomable seas. Thus, when the vast Atlantic becomes a continent, Teneriffe will be the renowned Chimboraco, or known by some other name of a new world: and so of the other high islands. I here promise, with the permission of the Editor, to furnish the readers of the Republican with some interesting geological information, perhaps new to most of the readers of that intrepid, valuable and independent publication.

This is another digression; for which I claim the benevolent indulgence of my readers. And now, for our God again. That is our mark, on which shall descend the Tomahawk of Indian confidence, the forcible arrows of the magnanimous Materialists. Our weapon must be directed point blank to the centre of sacred nature; to the very bull's eye of identity. How comes it, that non-entity can govern entity? is a reasonable question, answer it who can, is it not fair? I have said, I would believe sooner than any of the nominal believers, if I were only convinced. But until I am convinced, I will not say I believe. God is a word to which we cannot attach a single idea. Of the words almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, we form only a confused notion. But on examination they vanish into less than thin air. Because, they imply a power superior to our comprehension. If God, then, is and will keep himself concealed from us, by his omnipotent power, we must absolutely conclude that he is not. In order to speak on the subject with propriety, we must not call ourselves worms, ignorant and vile beings; but sensible and well informed men, intelligent creatures, sprung up how we know not, and incapable of

developing the mystery of our origin; but highly capable of receiving information respecting it, and capable of calling in question the vapid idol of the priest—God. This, I know, will be deemed the *ne plus ultra* of human arrogance. Surely, of all other hypocrisies, the worst is, to decry human nature in ourselves. It happens always, that those sanctified sons of humility, who decry human nature and call mankind worms, are filled with ambition, pride and insolence: and according to their powers of degrading the multitude, they exalt and enrich themselves. Man *here* is beneath their pious concern: it is his precious soul they consider! And while they convey him to heaven, they defraud him on earth and send him to God to seek a recompence. By their doctrine, it appears, that this world is theirs; the next ours. Truth and experience show us their present happiness and our own misery. If, God ordains, or permits this, he is an unjust being! We put in *if*, to reconcile our argument to supposition; for we do not for a moment allow, what we neither can comprehend nor demonstrate. We fairly deny that there is a God. The routine of nature declares it impossible. But we prove, that, if there was or is one, he is a most unjust and malignant being. Now let him clear himself of the imputation. Our arguments to this point are decisive against the deity himself. The world is our witness: we may go to law with the king! and cast him!! observe that!!! If God is; and allows his sacred name to stand in favour of fraud, bloodshed, ruin and human misery, what is he? Who but a priest, or an ignorant fanatic made so by a priest, dare speak in favour of such a demon? For evil he must be. The priest is the legible God of the world, and I have no hesitation in saying, he is the worst being in it. Were there a God that we do not know, and were we to judge of him by his priest, whom we do know; how should we estimate his character? Pride, arrogance, cruelty, beastly lust and avarice; fraud, duplicity, ambition, ingratitude and meanness. What items to form a God with! yet, these truly characterise his priest, and of these and others worse, the priest has formed his God, whom we must adore or be damned, and whom, if we adore, we cannot rely on for a moment and so deserve to be damned. I BELIEVE NOT IN GOD.

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This little compilation is intended as an auxiliary in the dissemination of the principles of Thomas Paine; and perhaps, it is better calculated for that purpose, than one of his works, or all of them together. This is a selection of his beauties, and though the compiler does not pretend that he has left no room for improvement; his pretensions are that he has made the collection from a high approbation of the author's writings and principles and not from any motive of pecuniary profit. It is a work, which,

from its perspicuity, simplicity and chasteness, may be put into any person's hand, even into the hand of a child, and is not an unfit school book, where sentiment is committed to memory.

R. C.

WHAT IS GOD?—No. III.

Of his pretended Omnipotence. God is not the Almighty, but the MIGHTY ALL!

WHAT is called putting the cart before the horse in orthography, often does not alter the sense of a word; in other cases it totally changes its import, as is the case in the present instance. Your pages have repeatedly proved, and common reflection must convince us, that there can be no such existence as the ALL MIGHTY, or that being who shall be really Omnipotent. JEHOVAH cannot make contradictions to be true. He cannot say, "Yesterday and its events shall never have existed," and put the sentence in force! Nothing can obliterate and nullify what has once taken place, making it never to have been. No power can recal, as Horace says, *quod fugiens semel hora vestit*. And matter is an eternal necessity, (in this I agree with Plato) that presents a perpetual obstacle to the all-powerfulness of God. But though there be no All Mighty, there is a MIGHTY ALL; and the most philosophical of the Heathen Divinities was their PAN, or the *Great All in All*, comprehending the whole universe and its moving principle: in this sense, God is every where, and this is really all that was meant by the ubiquity and omnipotence of the Deity, by those ancient philosophers, who had an esoteric doctrine for themselves and an exoteric one for the swinish multitude.

When Robinson Crusoe's man, Friday, asked his master, *Why God Almighty did not kill the Devil?* he put a question to him that the most able defender of Omnipotence would be puzzled to answer!!!

I shall not say much of the pretended attribute of *Omnipotence* here, as it will be alluded to again in the consideration of *Omnibeneficence*, when I come to the detail of the evidence for the co-existence of these two powers. I trust I can throw some light on this question by a description of the lives of galley-slaves, post-horses, asses, and beasts of burthen in general, with that of almost every animal under the care of man, and of most that are in a wild state. I shall then examine gaols, hospitals, penitentiary-houses, tread-mills, inquisitions, gaming-houses, and brothels. I shall exhibit to view the filth, raggedness, and disease produced by the civilization of the lowest classes, and drawing a comparison between men's sufferings and animals, shall leave the reader to

judge for himself, whether, in the popular sense, God can be an omnipotent creator of such innumerable forms of misery? The origin of these terms called *Divine Attributes* are nevertheless all explainable by a careful survey of the *history* of Deism, or the belief in God. And I hope to illustrate their origin as I go on, tracing the progress of deification, from the primæval worship of the *elements*, and the *elementary powers personified*, to that of the *stars*, of the *sun*, and of sun and stars collectively in the spirit of fire, to the *soul of the world*, or great moving principle, and lastly to the *universe*, or MIGHTY ALL, itself, whose various elementary parts, considered separately, have subsequently been called its attributes, and have been transferred to its chimerical creator, the preposterous *Almighty God* of the Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. Now I must here observe, that, in the order of enquiry, the attribute of *Omnipresence* must be the next to be considered, conformably to the order of human opinions. For the first thing considered in order is the *Omnipotence*, or the inference of a power adequate to the production of all the phenomena produced, and it arises in the human mind from the organ or faculty of causation. Secondly, The phenomena every where present were said to have special causes every where present, and thus an *Omnipresence* was asserted: and these phenomena being various, a variety was feigned to exist in their several causes, and thus the powers of nature being once superseded, were afterwards personified, and the MIGHTY ALL, or Pan, became split into *Jupiter tonans*, the Thunderer; *Venus*, the emblem of procreation; *Flora*, the source of germination; and all the other Gods and Goddesses of the Greek and Roman mythology. Thirdly, The attribute of *Omnibeneficence* came last, and implies a separation of the good from the harmful powers of nature; and this idea taken up in more modern times introduced the vague doctrine of a *God of Grace*, of partial and interfering Gods, mixing with men, and being the very reverse of the Mighty All, bickering and squabbling with men, and capable of being worried and opposed by their creatures, revengeful, silly, full of petty jealousies and private animosities, and after all, only on a par, at best, with a legion of Devils, or the Resisters of Grace, who divide with them the empire of the human heart. Now, both Jehovah, on the Jewish, and Jupiter, on the Pagan side, with all their tributary Gods and Angels, sunk down gradually as the Western Empire increased, into these partial Godheads, and fought the battles, protected the crops, and, in short, "*prevented all the doings*" of Greeks, Romans, and Christians, as we may read of in Homer, Virgil, and the later of the Jew Books, and in all the accounts of battles and victories from the wars of Alexander, or of Cæsar, down to the latest dispatches of Lord Nelson. Now, as what is called the *Polytheistical Mythology*, sprang out of the *Omnipresence*, it must be considered forthwith, and will constitute the subject of my next num-

ber. When prosecuting the enquiry, What is God, I shall shew what he *was* in the minds of men when Jupiter, Juno, and the other astronomical Gods, held that sacred place in the minds of men, which Jehovah, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, afterwards assumed and divided with the really existing flesh and blood Divinity of Mecca. The Astronomical Heaven will also be considered, and proved to have too great an affinity with the Christian Paradise to permit any sensible mind to ascribe to the latter a more positive and less emblematical or figurative origin.

Your's, &c.

O. O.

NEWS!

THE political excitements of the last forty years, considered in antithesis to the present temporary cessation of violent revolutions, leaves the European world to gape for news and excitement: and the late ever-sounding phrase of *What news?* has almost died away. Struggles for liberty are still heard of as existing in South America and in Greece; but they are of so faint and uninteresting a character, as scarcely to be worthy of mention beyond the columns of a newspaper that is necessarily filled with such reports. I confess, that it is rare that I now hear of a foreign circumstance that excites the least feeling in my breast; but still I perceive a silent revolution working well its way through whatever portion of mankind the printing-press operates upon.

R. C.

WHAT IS GOD?

NONE of the Christians seem inclined to say a few words in answer to this question. Promises of an answer have been made, or rather an answer to the review of William Allen's Lecture in "EVERY MAN'S BOOK;" but none of them seem to be forthcoming. That review was thought of and produced in a few hours, and in the bustle of a shop: will not a month suffice for an answer? The work excites interest, is in demand, and we shall shortly make it a match book, in a new edition, for "EVERY WOMAN'S BOOK," the demand for which does not abate. Time, consideration and observation remove the prejudices that grew up with its first appearance. Respectable looking women purchase it and converse upon it, and we daily hear of cases where it has restored health and peace of mind to delicate married women.

R. C.

INTOLERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

To the Editor of "The Republican."

SIR,

ON Tuesday evening (the 24th inst.) upon my return from the seventy-seventh discussion of the Christian Evidence Society, in which the business that devolves on me must naturally be thought to induce considerable fatigue, I went, accompanied by a friend (Mr. B——) to take supper (*sicut meus est mos*) at the Cock Tavern, Fleet-street, which, from its proximity to my own residence, and the convenience of supplying warmth and refreshment with extraordinary expedition, is a considerable convenience of life to me: and one, which, for that reason only, I cannot be reconciled to be deprived of without remonstrance.

In the box, at the upper end of the room, besides myself and friend, there was a gentleman who made himself known to me with very flattering expressions of the pleasure he had received from me in my public character; and another gentleman who had that day arrived from Cambridge, and claimed the ever-agreeable familiarity which always obtains between gentlemen, upon discovering that they have both been educated in the same University. Our conversation ran on general reminiscences sufficiently interlarded with literary allusions, and Greek and Latin quotations, to gratify our mutual vanity: his, in shewing that he had acquired, and mine in shewing that I had not forgotten, the classic page. From classical allusions—from Plato to metaphysics—from metaphysics to divinity, the transition was imperceptible; and our agreeable coterie was joined by two gentlemen; one of whom had met me there before: and introduced his friend on this occasion, *expressly* to share the felicity of so interesting a conversation. Our tone of language was low, and adapted to the perfect amenity of feeling which prevailed amongst us. Not a word could by any possibility have obtruded itself on the audience of the adjoining box. Yet, for all this, our own attention was broken in upon—by a gradually increasing indication of interference from the box opposite, and we were obliged to hear from a gentleman in spectacles, repeated and offensively intended ejaculations of *Taylor, the Infidel!* "*He is a public character, and every man has a right to interfere.*" And, at last, after having called the oyster-man and waiters about him, and communicated to them the grounds of his indignation, he boister-

ously struck the table and exclaimed—"That man there! I'll not look at him! but that man! I say, that it will be a disgrace to the landlord of this house, if he ever suffers such a man as that to enter his house again." I had no occasion to answer this insolence; nor, indeed, either disposition or ability to do so. My cause was sufficiently warmly advocated by the gentlemen who sat with me, and seconded by the general sense of the whole company.

The young Cantab, however, made a foolish speech, and a vain attempt to conciliate the displeasure of the wrathful Christian, by telling him that we were all Christians—a compromise to which I did not choose to subscribe; and in a low tone of voice, taking the moment when such a tone could be heard, I took the liberty to remark that, "I was *not* a Christian, but as I had not come thither to say either my prayers or my belief, nor had ever at any time obtruded my conversation on any persons to whom it seemed disagreeable, I hoped I might be as welcome there as any other stranger, and be allowed to take a supper in peace upon the sufficient condition of paying for it." Upon this I begged to see the landlord himself, and was informed by the waiter that he had retired; but had commissioned him (the waiter) to inform me that "He desired I would never enter his house again." Upon receiving this message, for the first time, I appealed, and appealed very successfully to the sense of the whole company, "Whether upon what they had witnessed, a gentleman, who, as they saw, had given no offence; nor intended it to any one; who appeared in that room as a private individual only, and not one word of whose conversation was intended to be heard (nor could be heard but by the most unworthy and disgraceful listening and eaves-dropping) beyond the circle to which it had been agreeable, was to be forbidden the use of that public room by the mere authority of the landlord, and without any assigned reason whatever." I put the question to their sense of justice "as Englishmen, was such a message deserved? Was it fair between man and man? Was it common justice? Was it common honesty?" Every heart seemed to respond to the force of the appeal. Some who avowed that they differed from me in sentiment shook hands with me in expression of their sympathy in the sense of oppression; and I then put it to the judgment of the company "Whether it would become me, as a gentleman, on behalf of the public, not of the publican, to insist on my right of being entertained in that public-house in defiance of so unjust an inhibition." The unanimous decision was, that IT WOULD BECOME ME! And I accordingly announced my intention of returning to supper on the next evening at ten o'clock. I attended as I had promised, but to incur only the additional insult of being refused attendance; and have, therefore, no other redress but the consolation of my

fixed determination never to subject myself to a repetition of such unprovoked and unmanly insults.

I am, Sir, &c.

ROBERT TAYLOR.

NOTE.—Nothing but the religion of the subject could induce me to insert the following letter. Such a religion must be exposed and scouted. Call the Bible a History of the Jews, with a collection of their Tales, Psalms, and Proverbs, and no one will object to it as a history, though it would not be prudent to make it a class book for children; but while it is called a spiritual treasure, it deserves all the ridicule that can be thrown upon it. The writer of the following letter is not a youth; but one who has filled out the common age of man. I agree with the writer, that the contents of the Bible do not merit grave discussion other than upon the correctness or incorrectness of their historical relations.

R. C.

To the Editor of "The Republican."

SIR,

SOME author has compared metaphysical discussions to digging in a well; the deeper we go, the more we are in the dark; and a more happy comparison could not possibly be imagined. I am led to the above remark, from observing frequently in your valuable work, dry, tedious discussions respecting MATTER and SPIRIT; in which your correspondents are apt to confound themselves, and bewilder their readers by their attempts to explain IMMATERIALITY. Groping in the dark after phantoms, and trying to prove that NOTHING is SOMETHING; and by losing sight of physics, our only real guide, *pro* and *con*, to as little purpose as Locke when HE endeavours to define *immaterial substance*: as if substance were not matter.

But these investigations, insignificant as they may be, are infinitely preferable to the long-winded, unmeaning dissertations of your fire shovel-hat correspondents; (for such I presume them to be) respecting the holy trash so much in vogue at present, and of which such plentiful doses are *charitably* administered by the *higher* orders to their Christian brethren the *lower* orders, who, the fusty stuff being dubbed sacred, and abounding in such pretty stories as Baalam and the Donkey; The Strong Man and his Foxes; and Jonah in his Live Tripe-shop, &c. gape after it with all the eagerness of swine after garbage. The silly multi-

tude always delighting in the marvellous and absurd:—"The vulgar stare, amazement is their joy." Surely, Sir, we shall, in the course of a few years, as we are so rapidly advancing (*quere*, is it not crab-fashion?) in morality, by the distribution of holy gospels, tracts, evangelical magazines, and similar precious cat-lap, become a crimeless people, and have no further occasion for gaols, treadmills, and courts of justice.

But, Sir, in conning over the *precious* Jew-book, which, as the Bishops tell *Jammie*, the *breetish* (brutish) Solomon, in their Dedication, "excelleth all the treasures of the earth." (*They* and the host of sable slugs who fatten by it may very well say so.) I am puzzled to find why, or on what account, these Jews became such great favourites with the Great Jehovah! Was it for their pre-eminence in ignorance, barbarism, and beastly customs? Did their notorious addiction to CLOGHERISM and beastiality recommend them to the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings, and only ruler of Princes!! (Who, by the bye, swore terribly at them in his wrath, and smote them pretty handsomely now and then, considering they were such darlings.) Mr. Thomson, I perceive, observes, "that the Jews were an illiterate and unscientific people." What a wonderful discovery! What literature or science would Mr. T. find, I wonder, among the tribes of Cherokees or Catabaws, in the wilds of America, who talk notwithstanding of the Great Spirit, and seem in nowise inferior to the chosen holy squad? In many respects, indeed, there is a similarity in their customs and manners. The savages, in their grief or anger, cut themselves with flints or knives, which seems to have been a common practice with the snip-cock race.† The barbarous custom, also, of the Jewish females seizing the men by their testicles while fighting, seems to have been frequently practised among the savages,‡ and, indeed, this seems to have been so general a custom with the *chosen* females, that

* "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath *chosen thee* to be a *special people* unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."—Deut. vii.

† "Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead."—Deut. xiv.

‡ "Some years ago, the French missionaries and traders, having received many insults from the tribes of the Ottogamies and Saukies, marched a party of French and allied Indians to revenge their wrongs, under the command of Captain Morand, who coming upon them by surprize, killed or took prisoners the greatest part. On the return of the French to Green Bay, from whence they had set out, one of the Indian Chiefs, in alliance with them, who had a band of prisoners under his care, stopped to drink at a brook; in the meantime, his companions went on, which being observed by one of the women, whom they had made captive, she suddenly seized him with both her hands, while he stooped to drink, by an exquisitely susceptible part, and held him fast till he expired."—CARVER'S TRAVELS.

the Lord's locum tenens expressly tells the *Brimms* (very seriously, without doubt, for fear of his own tackle) their hands shall be cut off, if they do not desist,* and this, by the bye, proves the *holy* squad were without breeches, which, indeed, is not to be wondered at, since *Lord* Moses (he is so dubbed by Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of his Lordship—Numbers 11) and his reverend coadjutors, wore only half a pair upon high days and holy days,† when they were showing off in grand costume, with their hocus pocus, fee faw fummery.

But, if we admit the inferiority in the savage tribe, in these particulars, surely, the favourites bear the bell as to nastiness, beastiality, and pederasty; though, upon the last article, they were pretty well fried at Sodom and Gomorrah, without however curing their descendants of this detestable vice, witness the affair of the Levite and his concubine as to beastiality: the very formal prohibition both to men and women would seem to warrant it to have been a general practice.‡ But it is in filthiness the chosen people shine, beating Hottentots and Chickesaws out of the pit. Surely, the *sacred* text is mistranslated, instead of "thou art a holy people, above all people that are on the face of the earth," it should have been "thou art a stinking people," &c. as there would then have been truth and sense in it. Who could ever suppose the Lord's Lieutenant could have been under the necessity of ordering the ragamuffins to carry a paddle (a sort of spade probably) to dig holes with, whenever they evacuated; because the great Jehovah disliked UNCLEAN THINGS to lie about their camp when he was coming to see them on the third day; for which reason also they were not to "COME AT THEIR WIVES."§

Bravo! Jew-book! thou BOOK OF BOOKS, that "excelleth all the treasures of the earth." A precious squad of leeches hast

* "When men strive together, and the wife of the one draw near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the SECRETS, then thou shalt cut off her hand."—Deut. xxv.

† "And thou shalt make them the priests linen breeches, to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach; and they shall be upon Aaron and his sons when they come in unto the Tabernacle."—Exod. xxviii.

‡ "And if a man lie with a beast, he shall be put to death. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto."—Levit. xx.

§ "And thou shalt have a *paddle* upon thy weapon, and it shall be when thou wilt *ease* thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and ahall turn back and cover that which cometh from thee."—Exod. xxxii.—"For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp (with cotton in his ol-factories no doubt) therefore shall thy camp be holy that HE see no UN-CLEAN THING in thee, and turn away from thee," (Deut. xxiii.) "and he said unto the people, 'Be ready against the third day, COME NOT AT YOUR WIVES.'"—Exod. xix.—What would their wives say to this prohibition?

thou fattened! Thanks to the brilliant faculties of the immortal biped—

“In apprehension so like a God,”

as the *divine* Shakspeare has it (no wonder he is dubbed *divine*, having plaistered his *blarney* on so thick!) Now, Sir—

“Are not these fine commodities
To be imported from the skies,
And vended here, among the rabble,
For staple goods and marketable!!”

I really am astonished how any person pretending to rationality (always excepting those who live by fraud and cunning) can be found at the present day, when we are so continually boasting of a *spread of intellect*, and an *enlightened age*, to advocate such a farrago of nonsensical fustian, nastiness and obscenity, and deem it sacred! Yet I flatter myself the time is not very distant (thanks to Carline, Paine, and Co.) when this Jew-book will be considered in its true light: *id est*, a bundle of filthy odds and ends, scraped together at different times by an artful gang of impostors, hocus pocussed up for divine, and held out to gaping idiots as a *sine qua non* of what they call salvation; though there is not any allusion to a future state, or, if any, very obscurely, in the whole volume; the holy buggaboo having forgot that in his budget of inspiration.*

You may probably think there is too much levity in the above animadversion; but to discuss such balderdash seriously, I consider as time thrown away. Ridiculous subjects should be treated with ridicule—

“Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit, and the Throne,
Yet touch’d and shamed with ridicule alone.”

“Priests of all persuasions,” says Goldsmith, “are enemies to ridicule; because they know it to be a most formidable antagonist to fanaticism; and preach up gravity to conceal their own shallowness of importance. It has ever been the most powerful enemy to enthusiasm and priestcraft, and is the only method of opposing them with success.”

* Should not the threat of hell-fire have been held out to Adam and his Rib to warn them from eating the *peepin*, as Foote’s Orator calls it? Or should not my Lord Moses have scared his riff-raff with the menace of damnation, instead of punishing them with scabs and lice, &c. It would probably have had a better effect with the stiff-necked crew, if we may judge from its effect since, and have been of great utility to the Lord of Hosts, by superseding his angry fits and consequent terrible swearing.

And now, Sir, I conclude with a confession similar to those of Helvetius and your intelligent correspondent, Mr. Potts, that I feel ashamed to be classed with, or to belong, in any shape, to such an idiotic biped race. To whom, I exclaim, with the poet—

“ While such stuff for religion passes,
They well deserve the whip like asses.”

N. B. Accept my thanks for your excellent remarks in answer to Wm. Allen in No. 8, I have never been more gratified in the course of a long life, than by the perusal, and I am truly sorry you intend discontinuing your “Republican,” as it has been a most useful vehicle for conveying truth and information, as I should hope, to thousand upon thousands.

Wishing health to yourself and family, and success to all your undertakings, I remain your sincere well-wisher,

Q. IN A CORNER *alias* EPICURUS.

OPINIONS OF THE LATE PROFESSOR PORSON.

To the Editor of “The Republican.”

MANY persons have asked, What did Porson think of the pretended truth of the Christian religion? Others have asserted, that he was actually a believer. Now I happen to know what the Professor thought about Christianity, having been intimately acquainted with him a few years before he died. On being asked the question by some friends one day, Whether in the course of his researches into Greek literature he had found reason to believe or to disbelieve in Christianity? He replied in the following curious manner:—“I *believe* this, that few people know what *belief* is, or they would not pester the world with their creeds. You know there is nothing so absurd but what it has been believed—and almost nothing so plain but what it has been doubted. I *believe* this, that the bigots in gowns and cassocks, if they caught me out in *disbelieving*, they would soon shew me and the world how little they *believed* in the charitable part of Christianity. But this I *know*, which is more than believing, that, damn them, they shall never catch me tripping. I will not fling pearls before them, they are swine, and will turn again and rend me.” This reply made every body laugh. A gentleman again asked, “But, Sir, do you not admire the character of a real Christian, who does to men as he would that men should do to him?”—“I respect,” said Porson, “a man who does as he would be done by; as for

Christians, *I have been groping about with a dark-lantern all my life in search of a Christian, and never could find one.* I have known many who call themselves so, that is to say, *many who put on gloves to shake hands with the Devil.*" I made a memorandum of this conversation in my journal. On another occasion he ridiculed the opinion that Pollio, in Virgil, meant Jesus Christ, but added, "Whatever people *think* is their *reality*, and whatever they *throw* is their *truth*." All these expressions are still ambiguous, and pronounce nothing certain as to his belief. Towards the close of life, however, being asked if he had made a will, he expressed himself decidedly on the subject, and laughed at the idea of his being a responsible being. He got into a discourse concerning the *world ending where he ended*, as it would end to *him*, he said, and the rest did not signify. He died intestate. He held what is called *Unitarianism* in the utmost contempt, for all what he wrote in his dispute with Archdeacon Travers. I do not know his opinion of Catholicism, as a useful or as a dangerous superstition, but speaking one day of future life, he said, "All nations have some feelings about the immortal part of them; the ancient Russians used to stop all the orifices of a defunct relative immediately at the point of death, that the soul might rest in the body against the Great Day. They thought," added he, "that the Divine particle might escape out of the fundament." These anecdotes I will vouch for, as I heard them. Now I ask of your candid readers, Was Richard Porson much more of a believer than Richard Carlile is?

Your's, &c.

QUESTOR.

Oct. 23, 1826.

ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

(Continued from p. 457.)

"All attacks upon received doctrines must ultimately affect the power by which they are established. But when the assault is made directly on that power, the fabric of church authority is in the most imminent danger. The aim of the former is only to make a breach in the wall of the edifice, but that of the latter is an attempt to sap the foundation. As we have seen all along that the darling object of Rome is power, to which every other consideration is made to yield, we may believe that attempts of this kind would excite a more than ordinary resentment. This, in fact, was the consequence: an unusual degree of rancour in the ecclesiastics, more especially in the pontiff and his minions,

mingled itself with their bigotry or mistaken zeal (for it would be unjust to impute the effect to either cause separately), and produced the many bloody, and, till then, unexampled scenes of cruelty, which ensued. The popes, by letter, frequently excited the bishops as well as princes, the bishops instigated the magistrates, by all possible means, to subdue or exterminate the enemies of the church. When the number of these enemies was so great, that it was impossible to attain this end by means of judicatories, civil or ecclesiastical, princes were enjoined, on pain of excommunication, interdict, deprivation, &c., to make war upon them, and extirpate them by fire and sword. And in order to allure, by rewards, as well as terrify by punishment, the same indulgences and privileges were bestowed on them who engaged in those holy battles, and with equal reason, as had been bestowed on the crusaders, who fought for the recovery of the holy sepulchre against the Saracens in the east."—Vol. ii. pp. 301. 302.

As the improvement of mind advanced, the need of efforts more and more strong, to crush the freedom of thought, produced at last the greatest monster which the world ever beheld; Holy Inquisition; the natural progeny, the legitimate offspring, reared to maturity, of priestly power engendering with magisterial ignorance; a conjugal connection, usually denominated the alliance of church and state, which always produces children with a true family likeness, but has never produced another of such gigantic powers as the Holy Tribunal, of which Dr. Campbell says,

"It may not be improper to conclude our account of the origin of the Inquisition, with a few things in illustration of the spirit in which it proceeds, that every one may have it in his power to judge, whether the relation it bears to the spirit of Christ be denominated more properly resemblance, or contrariety. It is so far from following the rules of almost all other tribunals, where any regard is shown to equity, or the rights of human nature, that, in every respect, where the ecclesiastic power has not been checked by the secular, those rules have been reversed. The account is entirely just, as far as it goes, which is given by Voltaire of the Spanish Inquisition, and he might have added, of the Portuguese, for both are on the same model. 'Their form of proceeding is an infallible way to destroy whomsoever the inquisitors please.' And let it be observed, that they have strong motives for destroying a rich culprit, as their sentence of condemnation is followed by the confiscation of all his estate, real and personal, of which two-thirds go to the church, and one-third to the state; so that it may be said, with the strictest propriety, that the judges themselves are parties, having a personal interest in the issue against the prisoner. 'The prisoners are not confronted with the accuser or informer.' Nay, they are

not so much as told who it is that informs. His name is kept secret to encourage the trade of informing. And, surely, a better expedient could not have been devised for promoting this dark business, than by thus securing at once concealment and gratification, with impunity, to private malice, envy, and revenge. Further, 'there is no informer, or witness, who is not listened to. A public convict, a notorious malefactor, an infamous person, a common prostitute, a child, are, in the holy office, though no where else, creditable accusers and witnesses. Even the son may depose against his father, the wife against her husband.' The detection of the grossest prevarication in the delator and witnesses is hardly ever punished, unless with a very gentle rebuke: let it be observed, by the way, that to the profligate and abandoned they can be very gentle, for they dread above all things, to do aught that might discourage informers, spies, and witnesses. And that there may be no risk of a want of information, they have, in all parts of the kingdom, spies of all different qualities, who are denominated the familiars of the holy office, a place of which even men of high rank are sometimes ambitious, from different motives, some for the greater personal security, others because it empowers them to take a severe revenge on their enemies, and others, no doubt, because they think they do God good service. The wretched prisoner is no more made acquainted with his crime than with his accuser. His being told the one might possibly lead him to guess the other. To avoid this, he is compelled, by tedious confinement, in a noisome dungeon, where he never sees a face but the jailor's, and is not permitted the use either of books, or of pen and ink, or, when confinement does not succeed, he is compelled, by a train of the most excruciating tortures, 'to inform against himself; to divine and to confess the crime laid to his charge, of which often he is ignorant.' An effectual method to bring nine-tenths of mankind to confess any thing, true or false, which may gratify their tormentors, and put an end to their misery. 'This procedure,' adds our historian, 'unheard of till the institution of this court, makes the whole kingdom tremble. Suspicion reigns in every breast. Friendship and openness are at an end. The brother dreads his brother, the father his son. Hence taciturnity is become the characteristic of a nation endued with all the vivacity natural to the inhabitants of a warm and fruitful climate. To this tribunal we must likewise impute that profound ignorance of sound philosophy, in which Spain lies buried, whilst Germany, England, France, and even Italy, have discovered so many truths, and enlarged the sphere of our knowledge. Never is human nature so debased, as where ignorance is armed with power.'

"In regard to the extent of power given to inquisitors by papal bulls, and generally admitted by the secular authority in those countries where the inquisition is established, I shall give the

few following instances out of many that might be produced. First, it is ordered, that the convicts be burnt alive, and in public; and that all they have be confiscated: all princes and rulers who refuse their concurrence in executing these and the other sentences authorized by the church, shall be brought under censure, that is, anathematized and excommunicated, their states or kingdoms laid under an interdict, &c. The house, also, in which the heretic is apprehended, must be razed to the ground, even though it be not his, but the property of a person totally unsuspected. This ferocious kind of barbarity, so utterly irreconcilable to all the principles of equity, is, nevertheless, extremely politic, as it is a powerful means of raising horror in the ignorant populace, and of increasing the awe of this tribunal, in men of all denominations, who must consider it as extremely dangerous to have the smallest connection with any person suspected of heresy, or so much as to admit him into their houses. The Inquisitors are also empowered to demand of any person whom they suspect (and, for their suspicions, they are not obliged to give reason), that he solemnly adjure heretical opinions, and even give pecuniary security that he shall continue a good Catholic. The court of Inquisition are also privileged to have their own guards, and are authorized to give licences to others to carry arms, and to enlist crusaders. One of Paul the 4th's bulls does not allow a reprieve from the sentence to one who, on the first conviction, recants his opinion, if the heresy be in any of the five articles mentioned in that bull. But what is, if possible, still more intolerable, is, that, by a bull of Pius the 5th, no sentence in favour of the accused shall be held a final acquittal, though pronounced after canonical purgation; but the holy office shall have it in their power, though no new evidence or presumption has appeared, to re-commence the trial, on the very same grounds they had examined formerly. This ordinance ensures to the wretch, who has been once accused, a course of terror and torment for life, from which no discovery of innocence, though clear as day, no judgment of the court can release him. Another bull of the same pontiff ordains, that whoever shall behave injuriously, or so much as threaten a notary, or other servant of the Inquisition, or a witness examined in the court, shall beside excommunication, be held guilty of high treason, be punished capitally, his goods confiscated, his children rendered infamous, and incapable of succeeding to any body by testament. Every one is subjected to the same punishment, who makes an escape out of the prison of the office, or who attempts, though unsuccessfully to make it; and whoever favours or intercedes for any such. In these classes, persons of the highest rank, even princes, are comprehended.

“ Every one must be sensible, that there is something in the constitution of this tribunal so monstrously unjust, so exorbi-

tantly cruel, that it is matter of astonishment, that in any country the people, as well as the secular powers, would not rather have encountered any danger, than have submitted to receive it. Nor can there be a stronger evidence of the brutish ignorance, as well as gross depravity of any nation, than that such a judicatory has an establishment among them." — Vol. ii. pp. 312—318.

These are specimens (for specimens are all which we can afford to present) of the evidence with which history teems, of the persecuting spirit of the first great incorporation of priests. The priestly incorporation called the Church of England stands next in power; and, as a natural consequence, next, also, in the ranks of persecution.

It is highly instructive to observe the circumstances, in which the English corporation of priests made their efforts to secure to themselves the monopoly of priestly influence on the minds of their countrymen, by their grand instrument, persecution.

They had just executed a successful revolt against the monopoly of their predecessors, and to effect this object had been obliged to destroy the foundation on which it principally rested, the claim of infallibility. The strong arguments by which the Catholics supported this claim, affirming that the credibility of revelation itself rested upon it, they had set at nought, denying that it was ever promised to his church by the Author of our religion, or that any man or set of men had ever given, or could give, satisfactory evidence of possessing it. They inferred, accordingly, that they had a right to impute error to the Catholic church, when they saw reason to do so, and to separate from her communion, when they deemed it unsafe to abide in it.

It is astonishing how completely, and immediately, they lost sight, or lost regard, of the inevitable conclusion, that, if they had a right, on the inference of error, to separate from the Church of Rome, others had as good a right, on the same inference, to separate from them.

The formula of words, made use of by the two parties, to give colour to their proceedings, was different, the proceedings themselves were essentially the same. We persecute, said the Church of Rome, because we are infallible, and know it is damnable to dissent from us.

We, said the Church of England, persecute, because that excellent order, which is called Uniformity, will be violated by dissenting from us.

The Catholics were infinitely more generous and consistent in their proceedings and arguments. We, said they, addressing themselves to the objects of their penal benevolence, know for certain that you will plunge yourself and others in eternal and inconceivable torments, unless we interpose.

What was the corresponding address of the English? We know not, they were obliged to say, we know not, at least not for certain, but you may be in the right, and we may be in the wrong: nevertheless, we think it good to bring you over to our opinion, by acting on your body, when we cannot succeed with your mind.

Allow the premises of the Catholic priest, his conclusion was indubitable, and persecution, on his part, the highest of all conceivable duties. Adhere to the premises of the English priest, and there is nothing in human conduct more atrocious than his proceedings.

What man is there, who owns human feelings, who if he knew for certain that he could save a single fellow creature from everlasting torments, would not do so, by extinguishing the mere sublunary life, an instant, not of one man only, or a few, but of millions, nay of the whole human race? And how cheap would be the purchase!

From the doctrine on the other hand of the English priests; that no man is infallible, and hence that when two men equally sincere in their intentions, and perfect in their understandings, come to opposite conclusions, it is just as likely that one is right as the other, and certain that if one of them comes over to the opinion of the other, wrought upon by hopes and fears, pains and pleasures, or by any thing but the clear perception of evidence, he acts dishonestly and wickedly; it follows, that the English priests, in applying their pains and pleasures, hopes and fears, incur a double condemnation; first, in suborning this dishonesty; secondly, in risking the salvation of a fellow creature, who may himself have the saving belief, when they seduce him into damning error.

As the inconsistency and atrocity are glaring of persecuting any man for opinions without the gift of infallibility, the church of England has virtually assumed that she is infallible: disclaiming the assumption, as far as mere words go, but in ideas really and effectually maintaining it.

This was wittily expressed by a certain author, Sir Richard Steele, if we mistake not, who said that the difference between the church of England and the church of Rome was this: The church of Rome *could* not be in the wrong; the church of England never *was*. The church of England is like the man of whom Erasmus jocosely said, that though not the pope, he had a pope in his belly.

It would require many more than our number of pages, to give the history; even in abridgment, of the persecutions done by the priestly incorporation in England. The whole of the five volumes of Neal is but an imperfect record of them. We must content ourselves with selecting a few things as specimens.

Hardly was the authority of the church of Rome renounced,

and a new order of things recognised in England, when diversity of opinion began to be felt, and consequent uneasiness manifested itself among the leaders of the clergy. The growth of opinions odious to those leaders was accelerated by the return of the sufferers, who driven into exile by the persecutions of Mary, had resorted to Geneva and the Protestant parts of France, and drunk in the doctrines of a Presbyterian or Republican form of church government among the zealous and comparatively learned and accomplished Reformists of those parts of the continent.

It was not long before the desultory efforts of the clergy for crushing this spirit were embodied in a grand organ, of which we are happy that it is not necessary for us to give the description in our own words. But we entreat our readers to bestow upon it a sufficient portion of their attention; and to estimate coolly the weight of evidence which it involves.

Upon the death of Grindal, in 1583, the queen named to the primacy, Whitgift, a "zealous churchman," says Hume, "who had already signalized his pen in controversy, and who, having in vain attempted to convince the puritans by argument, was now resolved to open their eyes by power, and by the execution of penal statutes. He informed the queen that all the spiritual authority lodged in the prelates was insignificant without the sanction of the crown: and as there was no ecclesiastical commission at that time in force, he engaged her to issue a new one, more arbitrary than any of the former, and conveying more unlimited authority. The jurisdiction of the court extended over the whole kingdom, and over all orders of men: and every circumstance of its authority, and all its methods of proceeding, were contrary to the clearest principles of law and natural equity. The commissioners were empowered to visit and reform all errors, heresies, schisms, in a word, to regulate all opinions, as well as to punish all breach of uniformity in the exercise of public worship. They were directed to make inquiry, not only by the legal methods of juries and witnesses, but by all other means and ways which they could devise; that is, by the rack, by torture, by inquisition, by imprisonment. Where they found reason to suspect any person, they might administer to him an oath, called *ex officio*, by which he was bound to answer all questions, and might thereby be obliged to accuse himself or his most intimate friend. The fines which they levied were discretionary, and often occasioned the total ruin of the offender, contrary to the established laws of the kingdom. The imprisonment to which they condemned any delinquent was limited by no rule but their own pleasure. They assumed a power of imposing on the clergy what new articles of subscription, and consequently of faith, they thought proper. Though all other spiritual courts were subject, since the Reformation, to exhibitions from the supreme courts of law, the ecclesiastical commissioners were exempted from that

legal jurisdiction, and were liable to no control. And the more to enlarge their authority, they were empowered to punish all incests, adulteries, fornications; all outrages, misbehaviours, and disorders in marriage. And the punishments which they might inflict were according to their wisdom, conscience, and discretion. In a word, this court was a real *inquisition*; attended with all the iniquities, as well as cruelties, inseparable from that tribunal.”*

This must suffice, and well it may, as evidence of the passion for persecution which at that time distinguished the clergy. For their proceedings in detail we must refer to the proper authorities: to Neal, and the historians of the several sects; for in the general histories of England a most imperfect view of this interesting part of our story is to be obtained. It is well known that, in spite of all persecution which could be applied, the spirit of the nation continued to rise, and rise the faster in consequence of that persecution, till the appearance of Laud. Of that man we have recently had occasion to speak. He is a prolific source of evidence, not only of the spirit of the clergy in his own age; but, selected as he has been, for the standard of a churchman to the present hour, of the spirit of the clergy in every succeeding age.

That he was a relentless persecutor, is saying little. With such an impetuous rage of persecution was he driven, that, undeterred by all that opposition which public opinion now obviously presented to him, he went on, recklessly, to raise the storm, in which the church and the monarchy were both levelled with the ground.

At the restoration of the monarchy (of the intermediate period it is not necessary for us to speak), the church was also restored; and with it, the spirit of persecution in its pristine vigour. To ensure the extinction of rivals, the Act of Uniformity, that is, an act for the persecution of all dissenters from the established church, was passed in 1662.

“This act,” says Hume, “reinstated the church in the same condition in which it stood at the commencement of the civil wars.”† What that condition was, in regard to powers and desires of persecution, the account just recited, of the Commission court, sufficiently testifies. “And,” continues Hume, “as the old persecuting laws of Elizabeth still subsisted in their full rigour, and new clauses of a like nature were now enacted, all the king’s promises of toleration, and of indulgence to tender consciences were thereby eluded and broken.” The following great historical fact is remarkable. “However,” adds the historian, “it is agreed that the king did not voluntarily concur

* Hume’s History of England, chap. xli.

† Hume’s History of England, chap. lxiv.

with this violent measure, and that the zeal of Clarendon and of the church party among the commons, seconded by the intrigues of the Catholics, was the chief cause which extorted his consent." Hume says, that the Catholics seconded the persecuting views of the church, because their hopes rested upon the wideness of the breach between the contending parties.

Even the Act of Uniformity did not satisfy the avidity of the clergy for means of extinguishing rivals. Two years afterwards "it was enacted, that wherever five persons above those of the same household should assemble in a religious congregation, every one of them was liable, for the first offence, to be imprisoned three months, or pay five pounds; for the second, to be imprisoned six months, or ten pounds; and for the third, to be transported seven years, or pay a hundred pounds."*

The most remarkable transactions of the reigns of the last two of the Stuarts were the persecutions, hardly surpassed for savage barbarity by any with which the page of history is stained, carried on for the establishment of episcopacy in Scotland. We have so recently had occasion to dwell upon these transactions, in our review both of Brodie's History, and of Southey's Book of the Church, that the evidence thence afforded of the persecuting spirit of the church of England, must be fresh in the recollection of our readers.

It is only further necessary, therefore, that we should shew by sufficient samples the spirit manifested by the priestly corporation in England since the epoch of the Revolution.

* Hume's History of England, chap. lxiv.

(To be continued.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE parcel has been duly received from Portsea, with thanks to Mr. Wolgar for his communication. The Scotch Preacher, John Neave, is not worth a printed letter, nor indeed, scarcely worth this notice. His Letter, in the Portsmouth Paper, detailing German Christianity, is a very useful document, inasmuch as it shews that the superstition of Christianity is almost extinct in Germany, and that the preachers see it to be necessary to conform to the change of opinion upon the subject.

The late funeral of Talma shews the state of opinion in Paris as to the Christian superstition, and that no kind of missionary or evangelical preaching can bring the body of Frenchmen back to a love of monks and friars.

R. C.

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